



United States Department of Agriculture

**RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS  
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE**

*www.ars.usda.gov*

*“Solving Problems for the Growing World”*

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Announcement Number:** ARS-X5W-0416  
Demo/Alternative Merit  
Promotion

**Position Title/Series/Grade:**  
Biological Science Laboratory Technician (Plants)  
GS-0404-7/8

**Promotion Potential:** GS-8

**Employment Type:** Full-time - Permanent

**Grade and Salary Range:**  
GS-07: \$34,149.00 to \$44,395.00 per year  
GS-08: \$37,819.00 to \$49,161.00 per year

**Location of Position:**  
Dairy Forage Research Center, Madison, Wisconsin

**Who Can Apply:** All U.S. Citizens

**Opening Date:** September 12, 2005

**Closing Date:** September 26, 2005

For copies of vacancy announcements and/or application materials, please call (301) 504-1482. For additional information regarding employment opportunities, please visit <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/jobs/apply.htm>.

**Contact Information**

**Human Resources Specialist:**  
Latania Maise  
(301) 504-1583

**Location Contact Information:**  
Jean Weinbrenner  
(608) 890-0044

**DC Relay Service:** (202) 855-1234 (TDD)

**Send Applications to:**  
USDA, Agricultural Research Service  
Human Resources Division  
Attn: Latania Maise/ARS-X5W-0416  
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Stop 5106  
Beltsville, MD 20705-5106  
**Fax:** (301) 504-1535  
**E-mail:** [scirecruit@ars.usda.gov](mailto:scirecruit@ars.usda.gov)

Applications must be postmarked, e-mailed or faxed by the closing date of the announcement. Applications received in Government envelopes will not be considered.

Please take advantage of the Application Package Checklist at the end of this announcement to ensure your application is complete.

**Applications will also be accepted from USDA Surplus and Federal Displaced Employees in the commuting area.**

**Major Duties:**

The position is located in the Dairy Forage Research Center on the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison, Wisconsin. The incumbent will provide technical assistance for a research program focused on breeding and genetics of perennial grasses. The duties of the position involve:

- Conducting research organized by the supervisor, including planting, transplanting, harvesting of plants, processing plant samples, and harvesting and processing of seed.
- Providing technical guidance to seasonal students and organizing activities according to their schedules, needs, and level of expertise.
- Operating and maintaining specialized research equipment such as planters, harvesters, mowers, sprayers, and roto-tillers.
- Processing, maintaining, and preserving seed stocks and plant samples.
- Maintaining inventory of chemicals, fertilizer, supplies, and equipment for laboratory, greenhouse, or field. Keeping work site in a neat and orderly manner.
- Collecting and summarizing data from laboratory, greenhouse, and field experiments. Keeping detailed computer records of field and greenhouse activities and work plans.

**Qualifications Required:** Your education and experience will be evaluated against all qualification requirements (basic and any additional requirements) listed below. The applicant must meet the education requirements or the specialized experience.

**Education Requirement:** **GS-7:** Applicant must have 1 full year of graduate level education in a field of study directly related to the work of the position. **GS-8:** Applicant must have 1 ½ year of graduate level education in a field of study directly related to the work of the position.

**OR**

**Specialized Experience:** the applicant must have 1 year of specialized experience equivalent to the next lower grade level. This experience must have equipped the applicant with the following knowledge, skills, or abilities:

1. Knowledge of whole-plant biology, including growing plants in field and greenhouse, diagnosing and solving problems, and designing and implementing new protocols and strategies.
2. Skill in operating and maintaining small-scale mechanical equipment such as planters, harvesters, mowers, sprayers, and roto-tillers to support field research.
3. Skill in collecting, analyzing, and summarizing experimental data and generating detailed reports using personal computers and software packages.

**If qualifying all or in part based on your education, please submit a copy of your college transcripts OR a list of college courses with credit hours, dates completed, and grades received. If this information is not provided, your education may not be appropriately evaluated and you may lose consideration for this position. If your qualifications are based in any part on education and you are selected for this position, you will have to provide an official copy of your academic transcripts prior to entering on duty.**

Your education and experience will be evaluated against the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) as outlined under specialized experience. A specific response to the requirements outlined under specialized experience is highly recommended to ensure adequate consideration in the evaluation process.

## Other Important Information

### Benefits Package:

A Benefits Package is authorized for this position. Additional information about Federal benefits can be obtained at [www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm).

### Veteran's Preference:

For further details, call the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at 478-757-3000 or TDD 478-744-2299. Select General Information on the Federal Employment Policies and Procedures, and then Veterans Preference and Special Appointing Authorities for Veterans. Or visit their VetGuide website at [www.opm.gov/employ/veterans/html/vetguide.asp](http://www.opm.gov/employ/veterans/html/vetguide.asp).

### Relocation Expenses:

Payment of relocation expenses will be determined in accordance with P&P 412.5, Recruitment and Retention Incentives and Other Special Pay, Sections 6 and 7, as amended by Bulletin 03-402, which may be found at: [http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing\\_recruit/reloweb.htm](http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing_recruit/reloweb.htm).

### Financial Disclosure Requirement:

Federal employees are subject to prohibitions against officially dealing with outside organizations in which they have a financial interest. You may be required to submit a financial disclosure report if hired for this position.

### False statements:

If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired; may be fired after beginning work; or may be fined or jailed.

### Optional Form 306, (Declaration for Federal Employment):

If you are selected for this position, you will be required to complete this form before an offer may be made.

### USDA Surplus/Federal Displaced Employees:

USDA Surplus/Federal displaced employees must submit documentary evidence of eligibility. Well qualified surplus and displaced employees within the local commuting area will receive selection priority as provided by OPM regulations. Well-qualified means the applicant meets the basic qualification and eligibility requirements and all selective placement factors; is rated above minimally qualified against the KSAs or quality criteria; and is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry. Applicants must submit the following:

- 1) a copy of your RIF Separation Notice or Certification of Expected Separation or other documentation indicating that you are a surplus employee;
- 2) evidence of full performance level of current position;
- 3) a copy of your most recent performance appraisal; and
- 4) a copy of your most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, to verify reassignment eligibility.

### Selective Service System:

Males over age 18 who were born after December 31, 1959, must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for Federal employment.

### Reasonable Accommodation:

Reasonable accommodation is provided to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, or have questions regarding reasonable accommodation and/or accessibility for any part of the application and hiring process, please contact the Disability Program Manager on 202-720-6161 or through the DC Relay Service on 202-855-1234 (TDD). The decision to grant reasonable accommodation is made on a case-by-case basis.

### Civil Rights Policy Statement:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity employer and provider. Discrimination is prohibited in all USDA programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center on 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

**To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD).**

## Application Package Checklist

**If application packages do not contain all of the requested information, you may lose consideration for the job. To help you ensure your application fully outlines your qualifications and eligibility for this position, please submit the following documentation.**

- ☐ Optional Form 612 (Optional Application for Federal Employment), SF-171 (Application for Federal Employment), Resume, Curriculum Vitae, or other document outlining your qualifications (Go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to obtain the OF-612).

**The following information is required of all applicants:**

- ☐ Announcement number, title, and grade(s) of the position
- ☐ Full name, mailing address (including zip code) and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)
- ☐ Social security number
- ☐ Statement that you are a U.S. citizen (if not using the OF-612 or SF-171)
- ☐ Copy of DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) (if claiming veterans preference) (Visit the following web site for additional information:
- ☐ SF-15 (Application for 10-point Veteran's Preference) plus the support documentation required by this form (if claiming 10-point veterans preference) (Go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/sf.asp> to obtain form.)
- ☐ Paid and non-paid work experience related to the position. For each period of work experience include:
  - \_\_\_ Job title
  - \_\_\_ Series/grade (if Federal employment)
  - \_\_\_ Duties and accomplishments
  - \_\_\_ Employer's name and address
  - \_\_\_ Supervisor's name and contact information
  - \_\_\_ Starting and ending dates of employment (at least month & year)
  - \_\_\_ Number of hours worked per week
  - \_\_\_ Salary
  - \_\_\_ Indicate if we may contact current supervisor/employer
- ☐ Other job related information, such as training courses (title & year); skills (e.g., other languages, computer software/hardware, tools, etc.)
  - \_\_\_ Certificates/licenses (current)
  - \_\_\_ Honors, awards, and special accomplishments
  - \_\_\_ Supplemental questionnaire if applicable (usually for Federal Wage System positions - WG, WL, WS)
- ☐ Copy of college transcripts (if qualifying all or in part on the basis of education for this position) (If you have non-conventional education, e.g., foreign study, continuing education units, life experience, etc., go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e4.htm#e4a> and look under the heading "Other Education" for information governing acceptability of this type of education.)
- ☐ Copy of SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action) to verify possession of competitive civil service status (if you are a current or previous federal employee)
- ☐ Copy of most recent performance appraisal (if you are a current federal employee)
- ☐ Second copy of application package (if the position is open to candidates outside the federal government AND if you

are a current federal employee or a candidate with reinstatement eligibility and wish to be considered under both merit promotion and competitive examining procedures).

- Support documentation for eligibility for special hiring authorities, such as disability, Peace Corps service, etc. (If you have questions about whether you are eligible for a particular hiring authority, please call the servicing HR specialist or visit the web site at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/a2.htm> and scroll down to the subject heading, “Category”.)
- Support documentation if you are a USDA surplus or federal displaced employee (See pertinent section under “Other Important Information” below.)
- Self-certification of typing speed (if required as a basic qualification for the position)
- While not required, a separate response to the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs listed under Specialized Experience) and Selective Placement Factor(s), if present, for this position may better highlight your specific qualifications for this position. (For an explanation of KSAs, go to the web site at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers/whatksa.html> ).

**If this is your first time applying for a federal job, or if you wish to view more detailed information about various aspects of applying for federal jobs, go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to access the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Optional Form 510.**